



Clarence Gardens Bridge Centre

Newsletter January 2026



TWAS THE MABEL BEFORE CHRISTMAS by Richard Pavlicek

*Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, 'cept me and my spouse
And one other couple who came over to play
In a rubber bridge game that had lasted all day.
The night lingered on and the cocktails they came
As my wife was declarer in a contract of game.
Our bidding was awful and very much troubled,
But the ultimate bid was left undoubled.
The opening lead saw my hand hit the table.
My thoughts at the time were, "Come on, Mabel!"
She handled the play with the greatest of ease,
And scored up her contract as swift as a breeze.
The defence, I might add, was top of the line.
Not one trick was dropped, unmistakably, fine!
So here is the deal that made us a winner,
And gave Mabel's eye that perpetual glimmer.*

Dir: South

♠ A98

All vul.

♥ 87

♦ A6432

♣ K52

♠ KQJ

♠ 76543

♥ QJ106

♥ 92

♦ QJ87

♦ 95

♣ 94

♣ QJ107

♠ 102

♥ AK543

♦ K10

♣ A863

What was the final contract?

The puzzle could also be stated, "What is the only game contract that is makeable against best defence?" The most obvious candidate is 3NT. There are seven top tricks, and declarer can establish an eighth by playing on hearts or diamonds. but there is no way to come to a ninth trick against proper defence. No matter how well you play, it can't be made.

What about four hearts in the 5-2 trump fit? Eight tricks are easy - three natural trump tricks plus the aces and kings in the side suits - and declarer can score a ninth with careful play. but a 10th trick will elude even the finest declarer. Try again.

Five clubs? Or five diamonds? Either seems highly improbable since an additional trick is required. And you're right. five of a minor is out of the question. Well, what's left? You guessed it! After a few cocktails, Mabel was feeling a little tipsy and accidentally opened the bidding in the wrong suit. The auction went:

S	W	N	E
♠	p	2♦	p
2♥	p	4♠	

Yes, the game in spades is the only one that makes - on a 3-2 fit! The opening lead was a trump (best) and Mabel won the ace in dummy. She cashed the top cards in each side suit ending in her hand, then ruffed a heart with the eight, ruffed a diamond with the ten, and ruffed a heart with the nine. The defence was helpless to stop it.

Now, if you believe this story. . .

A special thanks to Richard Pavlicek for this article, taken (with his permission) from his Internet homepage.

Richard Pavlicek of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, is a bridge expert, writer, teacher, and a 10-time North American champion. He is co-author of the internationally acclaimed book, Modern Bridge Conventions. You can visit his website at <http://rpbridge.net>

Committee News

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Sunday February 15th, with lunch and a free game afterwards.

I shall be retiring from the position of club president, whilst Moira Smith will not be continuing as club secretary. The committee positions currently held by Cynthia Brinkman and Stuart Tuck will also be declared vacant, each having completed their two year term.

The Birthday Boy by Carmel Thompson

*From Adelaide days as a student keen,
Bridge soon became the lifelong scene.
Lectures were skipped, but cards were played,
And a master of bidding was swiftly made.
Through Sydney's bustle, Queensland's sun,
Wherever he travelled, Bridge was the one.
At tables he triumphed, with calm command,
Winning titles across this Bridge-playing land.
A director with wisdom, both sharp and kind,
Always with players' needs in mind.
Spotting the slip, the hesitation, the pause,
Then adding a quip that drew hearty applause.
Maths met Bridge in his clever design,
Software to keep the scores in line.
A pioneer spirit, both steady and bright,
Guiding the game with skill and insight.
Four times married, but today we cheer,
For Sharmini's cooking keeps him near.
With dogs at his side, both mighty and tall,
They sprawl on the lounge and command it all.
In the garden he tends, in books he delights,
Sharing a novel to brighten our nights.
Casual in dress, but serious in deed,
David has given Bridge what it most needs.
And now in two-thousand twenty-five,
A medal of honour keeps his name alive.
The very first winner, his passion declared,
For Bridge in SA, no one compared.
So lift up your glasses, let's all give cheer,
For eighty grand years of a life lived here.
David, we thank you, for all that you do,
Happy Birthday to you – and may joy follow through!*

2026 Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of Bridge in the City Incorporated will be
held at 11:00 am on **Sunday February 15th**
at the Clarence Gardens Bowls Club
Lunch will be served, with a free pairs game to follow.

Responding to Partner's One of a Major Opening

Twenty odd years ago the accent of suit bidding changed – instead of being based on the combined number of points that you had, auctions became much more concerned with the combined length of the agreed trump suit, and useful shortages.

The rule then was that with a combined nine card fit and half the points you happily competed to the three level, with just an eight card fit you conceded that level to the opponents.

With this in mind American player Marty Bergen introduced (and did very well from) the concept of Bergen raises, where after partner's major opening an immediate 3♣ response showed four card support and 6-9 high card points, while 3♦ showed 9-11. A 2NT response showed four card support and game values, more about that later.

This worked comparatively well, being attuned to the thinking then and now, however the convention had problems when responder had a near opening hand and three card support. Bergen's choice was to bid 2♠ with such a hand opposite partner's 1♥ opening, and 3♥ opposite 1♠. Such a treatment often left pairs one level higher than they would have preferred, (particularly with light openings being in vogue) whilst excluding other possibly more useful meanings for such a call.

The fact that most were playing 2/1, where a new suit call at the two level was game forcing also precluded a temporising call followed by a delayed invitational raise.

So, it was out of necessity that the immediate 2♣ response was amended to either have its usual meaning, or else a prepared three card raise. In response a simple rebid of the opened suit indicates a minimum opening, any other call possibly showing extra values. For example:

1♠ 2♣
2♠ Weak, wouldn't accept a game invite

1♠ 2♣
2♦ may be temporising by opener, too strong to rebid 2♠, not keen on 2NT

1♠ 2♣
2♥ Natural, may still have a weak hand

1♠ 2♣
2NT 13+, game forcing, would accept a game invite

1♠ 2♣

3♣ must have extras, due to the uncertainty of the 2♣ response

1♠ 2♣

2♦ 2♠ -Responder has an invitational raise

1♠ 2♣

2♥ 3♠ – game forcing, stronger than 4♠

1♠ 2♣

2♦ 2NT – game forcing

How should you proceed with those hands where responder has game values, and possible slam interest? First, you can go via the two examples immediately above, where responder has shown game values, leaving it to opener to bid on with extras.

Alternatively, with four card support and game values, responder can bid an immediate 2NT, showing this specific hand. There are various conventions then available, I play that opener shows a shortage by bidding that suit, indicates a minimum by rebidding 3NT or four of the agreed major, all other rebids showing extra values.

When the Opponents Don't Know Their System

You are having a contested auction, and an opponent makes a call. You ask the opponent's partner what the bid means, and he is uncertain. What do you do now?

Call the Director! If your question is a reasonable one the Director will send the unknowing partner away from the table and then ask the player who made the call of the conventional meaning, if there is one.

The player who made the call cannot, of course, draw any inference from partner's failure to remember the meaning of the call. Further, only the Director can send a player from the table, no matter how much their opponents or even partner may wish to do so.

When Partner Doesn't Know Your System

This becomes a matter of priorities - you naturally wish to give the proper information to the opponents; however you must not do so while partner can take advantage of the correction.

Therefore, you cannot correct the misinformation during the auction. If your side is declaring on the hand, you should inform the opponents of the true meaning of the call before the opening lead is made. If instead your side is defending, then you cannot tell the opponents until the play is concluded.

In both instances the Director should be summoned at the end of the hand if the misinformation may have caused any damage to your opponents.

Create Your Own Convention Card

The ABF Convention Card is easy to edit, using Adobe Acrobat. You can download a draft version of a Standard convention card from our website ("For Members", then "Standard Convention card") or directly there from this newsletter since it is at <http://www.bridgeinthecity.net.au/Standard.pdf>

Having downloaded the form, you should save it in a folder on your computer, then open it using Acrobat DC10.

Next you begin editing it to your own personal choices. Suit symbols are inserted by using exclamation mark and then the first letter, so !c for club, !h for heart, etc.

When you are finished save it first, then ask for it to be printed. The two pages will usually be printed back to back, without your asking. For your other partnership, open this file again, make the necessary changes, and save it under the name of the new pairing.

Monthly Place-Getters

FRIDAY DECEMBER PAIRS

- 1 Moira Smith & Graham Stucley
- 2 Genevieve Donnelly & Terry Healey
- 3 John Pumpa & George Wilby

FRIDAY PINK DECEMBER PAIRS

- 1 Earlene Aufderheide & Carolyn Cooper
- 2 Ken Stone & Peter Tuck
- 3 Janet Hegarty & Janice Paltridge

MONDAY DECEMBER PAIRS

- 1 Genevieve Donnelly & Terry Healey
- 2 John Neuling & Trevor Parr
- 3 Jackie & Warren Ward

2026 SubScriptionS are now due.

\$40 for home club members, \$10 for associates.

Payments can be made to the duty director or, preferably, to the club's bank account BSB 805-050, account number 102-790-715, indicating the payee and the purpose of the payment.

Non member table fees will be \$10 from January 1st

Michael's Cue Bids

Michael's cue bids are used as overcalls to show two five card suits, strength to be determined.

As an example, if your right hand opponent opens one of a major, two of the same major shows five+ cards in the other major, and five+ cards in one of the minors, while a jump 2NT overcall promises both minors.

If instead your right hand opponent opens one of a minor, as a natural call, then two of the same minor promises five cards in each of the majors, while 2NT promises five + cards in the two lowest suits.

An alternative to this is to play two of the bid minor as showing the other minor and one of the majors, while 2NT shows both majors. This has the disadvantage of forcing you to the three level with both majors.

I haven't mentioned the high card points for such a call. First, points in your two suits are valuable, while outside honour cards, apart from Aces, are usually worthless, responder should judge his hand accordingly. A Michael's cue bid can be wide ranging in values, from a hand that is being used to pre-empt the opponents to one with game values. In general the minimum strength should be determined by the vulnerability, with responder being able to invite using a cue bid opposite a 2NT call (1♥ 2♥ P 2NT), or 2NT opposite a cue (1♥ 2NT P 3♥).

When the Auction is Finished

The auction ends after three consecutive passes.

- The player to declarer's left tables the opening lead face down.
- Declarer and the other defender may then ask questions about the auction.
- The opening lead is turned face up.
- Dummy comes down.
- All bidding cards are returned to the bidding boxes. (It is permissible to leave the final contract out)

This ensures that all players have access to the auction for clarification before play begins. Premature removal of bidding cards can interfere with proper explanations and may violate etiquette or laws of the game.

Prepayment Scheme

Clarence Gardens Bridge Centre has its own prepayment scheme, allowing players to pay their table fees in advance.

Players then get a weekly email advising them of their balance, while containing a link to an internet schedule of all their deposits and deductions.

Payments can be made either to the Director on duty, or else online into the following Bridge in the City bank account. BSB 805-050, account number 102-790-715

Finally, when making an online deposit, please make sure that you give your name.

2025 Friday Purple

JANUARY PAIRS

- 1st Barnwell C/Kingsborough S
- 2nd Donnelly G/Healey T
- 3rd Smith M/Stucley G

FEBRUARY PAIRS

- 1st Donnelly G/Healey T
- 2nd Fuss J/Ward J
- 3rd Brinkman C/Phillips S

MARCH PAIRS

- 1st Barnwell C/Kingsborough S
- 2nd Hardwick C/Payne I
- 3rd Donnelly G/Healey T

APRIL PAIRS

- 1st Fuss J/Ward J
- 2nd Donnelly G/Healey T
- 3rd Thompson C & N

MAY PAIRS

- 1st Thompson C & N
- 2nd Barnwell C/Kingsborough S
- 3rd Colmer B/Smith H

JUNE PAIRS

- 1st Smith M/Stucley G
- 2nd Fuss J/Ward J
- 3rd Barnes S/Lucas M

JULY PAIRS

- 1st Phillips S/Roberts J
- 2nd Smith M/Stucley G
- 3rd Donnelly G/Healey T

AUGUST PAIRS

- 1st Donnelly G/Healey T
- 2nd Fuss J/Parker B
- 3rd Phillips S/Roberts J

SEPTEMBER PAIRS

- 1st Ferreira F/Miles D
- 2nd Phillips S/Roberts J
- 3rd Thompson C & N

OCTOBER PAIRS

- 1st Fuss J/Ward J
- 2nd Thompson C & N
- 3rd Drikas M/Thomas P

NOVEMBER PAIRS

- 1st Phillips S/Roberts J
- 2nd Barnwell C/Kingsborough S
- 3rd Ferreira F/Miles D

DECEMBER PAIRS

- 1st Smith M/Stucley G
- 2nd Donnelly G/Healey T
- 3rd Pumpa J/Wilby G

2025 Friday Pink

JANUARY PAIRS

- 1st McCaffrey V/Reed M
- 2nd Hegarty J/Paltridge J
- 3rd Stone K/Tuck P

FEBRUARY PAIRS

- 1st Hegarty J/Paltridge J
- 2nd Berry F/Kleeman J
- 3rd Bowman P/Glanfield L

MARCH PAIRS

- 1st Berry F/Kleeman J
- 2nd Bowman P/Glanfield L
- 3rd Larsen J/McCarthy B

APRIL PAIRS

- 1st McCaffrey V/Reed M
- 2nd Hegarty J/Paltridge J
- 3rd Berry F/Kleeman J

MAY PAIRS

- 1st Bowman P/Glanfield L
- 2nd Berry F/Kleeman J
- 3rd Stone K/Tuck P

JUNE PAIRS

- 1st Stone K/Tuck P
- 2nd McCaffrey V/Wishart J
- 3rd Aufderheide E/Brooks T

JULY PAIRS

- 1st Glanfield L/Wishart J
- 2nd Aufderheide E/Brooks T
- 3rd Fisher P/Fraser E

AUGUST PAIRS

- 1st Berry F/Kleeman J
- 2nd Hegarty J/Paltridge J
- 3rd McCaffrey V/Reed M

SEPTEMBER PAIRS

- 1st McCaffrey V/Reed M
- 2nd Berry F/Kleeman J
- 3rd Parr T/Riddle S

OCTOBER PAIRS

- 1st Stone K/Tuck P
- 2nd Hegarty J/Paltridge J
- 3rd McCaffrey V/Reed M

NOVEMBER PAIRS

- 1st Hegarty J/Paltridge J
- 2nd Stone K/Tuck P
- 3rd Parr T/Riddle S

DECEMBER PAIRS

- 1st Aufderheide E/Cooper C
- 2nd Stone K/Tuck P
- 3rd Hegarty J/Paltridge J

2025 Monday

JANUARY PAIRS

- 1st Donnelly G/Healey T
- 2nd Barnwell C/Kingsborough S
- 3rd Acfield P/Stucley G

FEBRUARY PAIRS

- 1st Neuling J/Parr T
- 2nd Donnelly G/Healey T
- 3rd Faber J/Reynolds D

MARCH PAIRS

- 1st Donnelly G/Healey T
- 2nd Neuling J/Parr T
- 3rd Ward J & W

APRIL PAIRS

- 1st Donnelly G/Healey T
- 2nd Barnwell C/Kingsborough S
- 3rd Ward J & W

MAY PAIRS

- 1st Barnwell C/Kingsborough S
- 2nd Donnelly G/Healey T
- 3rd Eitzen G & S

JUNE PAIRS

- 1st Faber J/Lever C
- 2nd Neuling J/Parr T
- 3rd Barnwell C/Kingsborough S

JULY PAIRS

- 1st Donnelly G/Healey T
- 2nd Neuling J/Parr T
- 3rd Aufderheide E/Reed M

AUGUST PAIRS

- 1st Donnelly G/Healey T
- 2nd Barnwell C/Kingsborough S
- 3rd Hickey C/Liddy R

SEPTEMBER PAIRS

- 1st Donnelly G/Healey T
- 2nd Ward J & W
- 3rd Brinkman C/Stucley G

OCTOBER PAIRS

- 1st Neuling J/Parr T
- 2nd Brinkman C/Stucley G
- 3rd Donnelly G/Healey T

NOVEMBER PAIRS

- 1st Reed M/Wagner A
- 2nd Barnwell C/Kingsborough S
- 3rd Eitzen G & S

DECEMBER PAIRS

- 1st Donnelly G/Healey T
- 2nd Neuling J/Parr T
- 3rd Ward J & W

2025 Special Events

GOLDEN BUNNY TEAMS

- 1st C Barnwell - S Kingsborough - M Smith - G Stucley
- 2nd C Brady - E Eccleston - E Kenny - B Stallbom
- 3rd J Donoghue - R Grund - C Nikolic - J Roberts

BIC GNOT QUALIFYING

- 1st S Anderson - R Grund - A Harris - K Lange
- 2nd J Fuss - S Martin - J Pearson - T Pearson
- 3rd M Coleman - B McKenzie - H Rollond - E Truskewycz

BIRTHDAY CONGRESS - A GRADE

- 1st Brady C/Eccleston E
- 2nd Carlmark P/Jensen B
- 3rd Fuss J/Ward J

BIRTHDAY CONGRESS - B GRADE

- 1st Phillips S/Roberts J
- 2nd Hayles A/Parker B
- 3rd Donnelly G/Healey T

Opening Leads

It's your opening lead against contracts of 1NT and 2♠. Having decided to lead this suit, which card should you play?

QJ76 NT 6, Suit Q

KQJ53 King, always

Q1094 NT 4, Suit 10

J862 2, always (not a suit I like to lead from)

J1062 NT 2 Suit J

KQ106 King, always

AK54 NT 4, Suit Ace

KQ864 NT 6, Suit K